

REMARKS

Claims 1-42 are currently pending in the present Application. In the present Amendment, claims 1, 17, 18, 21, 37, and 38 are amended, and claims 5, 25 and 41-42 are cancelled herein. Reconsideration of the Application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Appeal Proceedings

All claims 1-42 were rejected by the Examiner in a Final Office Action mailed on January 26, 2006. In response, Applicants filed an Appeal Brief on June 1, 2006 with all claims still standing rejected. However, in an Examiner's Answer mailed on November 27, 2006 in response to Applicants' Appeal Brief, the Examiner changed his position, and indicated that claims 5, 17-18, 25, and 37-38 were objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In a Decision On Appeal mailed on January 17, 2007, the Board of Patent Appeals additionally failed to sustain the Examiner's rejections of claims 8 and 28.

Examiner Interview Summary

On March 11, 2008, Applicants' representative, Gregory Koerner, held Examiner's Interviews with Examiner Kelly Jerabek and with Primary Examiner Ngoc Yen Vu to determine an appropriate response by Applicants in light of the Decision On Appeal mailed on January 17, 2008, in which the Examiner's rejections were affirmed only in part, and claims 5, 17-18, 25, and 37-38 were

identified as containing allowable subject matter, in accordance with the Examiner's admissions in the Examiner's Answer of November 27, 2006. In particular, the Examiner's Answer indicated that claims 5, 17-18, 25, and 37-38 were objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

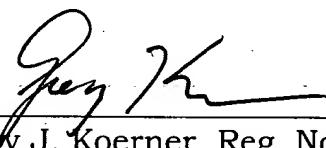
During the Examiner's Interview of March 11, 2008, Examiner Kelly Jerabek discussed allowable limitations from claims 5, 17-18, 25, and 37-38, and instructed Applicants to submit an Amendment to place the Application in condition for immediate allowance by amending the allowable claims to include their respective independent claims and any intervening dependent claims. Therefore, in accordance with the Examiner's instructions, claims 1, 17, 18, 21, 37, and 38 are amended, and claims 5 and 25 are cancelled herein. Claims 2-16, 19-20, 22-36, and 39-40 depend from respective allowable independent claims and are allowable at least for the same reasons. Reconsideration of the Application in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks is therefore respectfully requested.

Summary

Applicants submit that the foregoing amendments and remarks place the present Application in condition for immediate allowance. Because the cited references, or the Examiner's citations thereto, do not teach or suggest the claimed invention, and in light of the differences between the claimed invention and the cited prior art, Applicants therefore submit that the claimed invention is patentable over the cited art, and respectfully request the Examiner to allow claims 1-4, 6-24, and 26-40, so that the present Application may issue in a timely manner. If there are any questions concerning this Response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 3/13/08

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